CAPTAIN AMERICA

NO. 69
NOV.
10¢

COMICS

WHO COULD DREAM THAT SUCH TINY FOLK REALLY EXIST? AND, LEARNING THAT THEY DO EXIST, HOW COULD CAPTAIN AMERICA SUSPECT HOW DEADLY THEY COULD BE? "THE WEIRD TALES OF THE WEE MALES!"

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Editorial Consultant: Jean Thompson, M.D., Psychiatrist, Child Guidance Bureau; Board of Education, New York City

CAPTAIN AMERICA

IN

"THE *WEIRD* TALES OF THE WEE MALES!"

IT'S A WORLD YOU WON'T BELIEVE--THIS PLACE OF TINY PEOPLE WITH THEIR LITTLE LIVES BUT BIG, DEADLY HATES! CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS HAD MANY WEIRD ADVENTURES BUT HERE HE FINDS A STRANGE MAZE OF PLOTS AND COUNTER-PLOTS MIXED WITH TEARS AND LAUGHTER! READY? LET'S GO!

3565

AT THE LEE SCHOOL, PROFESSOR STEVE ROGERS, TEACHER OF ENGLISH, FACES A PROBLEM IN ETHICS AS...

BUT, PROFESSOR ROGERS, YOU DON'T MEAN TO TELL US YOU ACTUALLY *BELIEVE* THE STORY OF *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS*?

Jonathan Swift Gulliver's travels P.62

I DIDN'T SAY THAT! WHAT I *DID* SAY IS THAT ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE! EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T HAVE PROOF OF IT, IT *IS* POSSIBLE THAT A RACE OF LITTLE CREATURES, SUCH AS WERE DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK ABOUT GULLIVER, *DO* EXIST!

OH, COME NOW, PROFESSOR! WE'RE NOT *CHILDREN*, YOU KNOW!

TRUE, MISS MASON! BUT THERE ARE STILL UNDISCOVERED PLACES ON THIS EARTH! AND WHO IS TO SAY WHAT SORT OF LIFE EXISTS THERE?

I HAPPEN TO KNOW OF AN EVENT WHICH DISCLOSED THE EXISTENCE OF JUST SUCH A RACE OF LILLIPUTIANS --BUT AS YOU WILL LEARN WHEN I FINISH MY STORY, THE MAN WHO DISCOVERED THEM NEVER REVEALED THAT FACT!

IT ALL BEGAN WHEN CAPTAIN AMERICA WAS RETURNING FROM AN EXPEDITION TO THE NORTH POLE AREA! HE WAS FLYING ALONE IN HIS PLANE WHEN, SUDDENLY, HIS MOTOR BEGAN TO MISS...

OH, *BROTHER!* THIS LOOKS LIKE *TROUBLE!*

BANG! BANG!

"SUDDENLY THE PLANE WENT INTO A SCREAMING DEATH-DIVE..."

"... AND CRASHED INTO THE SIDE OF A REMOTE MOUNTAIN!"

CRASH!

"SO HERE--IN AN UNMARKED SPOT ON THE MAPS--IN A PLACE NEVER TRAVELED BY CIVILIZED MAN UP TO NOW--WAS CAPTAIN AMERICA, KNOCKED COLD BY THE CRASH!"

"FOR A LONG TIME, EVERYTHING WAS STILL...AS ONLY THE BLEAK, GRAY SKY LOOKED DOWN ON THE PRONE FIGURE OF CAPTAIN AMERICA! IT REALLY SEEMED, AT THE TIME, THAT THIS WAS THE END OF THE GREAT CRIMEFIGHTER!"

"BUT THEN FROM BEHIND A ROCK, ADVANCING CAUTIOUSLY, CAME A LITTLE FIGURE, NO MORE THAN *SIX INCHES HIGH!*"

"CAREFULLY, HE ADVANCED UP TO THE UNCONSCIOUS CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND PEERED AT HIS FEATURES!"

"THEN HE TURNED, GESTURED TOWARD THE SPOT HE HAD COME FROM, AND A HORDE OF LITTLE CREATURES JUST LIKE HIM, CAME OUT TO JOIN HIM..."

"...AND AT THEIR HEAD WAS A DIGNIFIED LITTLE GENTLEMAN WHO EXAMINED THE FALLEN WARRIOR CAREFULLY, AND THEN SAID..."

WHAT MANNER OF CREATURE IS *THIS*?

KING

ER...THAT...YOUR MAJESTY, SIR...IS, I BELIEVE, A MEMBER OF THE RACE OF BEINGS WHO LIVE IN THAT AWFUL PLACE WE CALL...YOU'LL EXCUSE THE EXPRESSION...THE CIVILIZED WORLD!

HMM...BUT HE SEEMS LIKE A NICE PERSON! *MY!* HE'S *BIG*, ISN'T HE?

KING

DOCTOR, EXAMINE THAT GIANT!

YES, YOUR MAJESTY! AT ONCE, YOUR MAJESTY! CERTAINLY, SIRE!

MY! MY! THIS IS THE MOST UNUSUAL CASE IN ALL MY EXPERIENCE! IT SHOULD PROVE QUITE INTERESTING!

HMMM!

AH!

MY! MY!

TSCH! TSCH!

WELL!

HO-HO!

HMMM!

DEAR ME!

HE'S ALL RIGHT! IT'S JUST THE SHOCK THAT KNOCKED HIM OUT! HE'LL COME TO IN AN HOUR!

HOORAY!

OH, IT'S GOOD HE'S NOT HURT!

YES, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN AWFUL!

KING

"THEN KING TEENY GAVE AN ORDER, AND THE HORDE OF LITTLE PEOPLE, SCRAMBLING ABOUT LIKE ANTS, GATHERED TO LIFT CAPTAIN AMERICA TO CARRY HIM TO THE MOUNTAIN CAVERN THAT WAS THEIR HOME!"

HEY, LOOK OUT THERE, BELOW! YOU ALMOST BUMPED MY ROYAL HEAD AGAINST THE ROOF! CAREFUL, OR HEADS WILL ROLL!

OOOPS! SORRY, YOUR MAJESTY!

OUR REGRETS, SIRE!

"AT LAST THEY REACHED THEIR DESTINATION--AN AMAZING LITTLE CITY--GLITTERING, SPARKLING, BUILT IN THE HEART OF THE GREAT MOUNTAIN!"

NOW THAT HE'S HERE, WHAT'LL WE DO WITH HIM?

LEAVE THAT TO KING TEENY! *HE'LL* KNOW!

OH, YES! HE'S *VERY* WISE!

WHEW! IS HE *HEAVY!*

WOW!

WHEW!

Super Market

INN

SILENCE! QUIET, EVERYONE! I WISH TO STUDY THIS PROBLEM!

KING

YES! *SH-H-N-H!*

HUSH!

SILENCE!

QUIET!

HE MUST STUDY!

HE MUST THINK!

SHADDUP!

OH, OUR KING IS SMART!

NO PROBLEM IS TOO BIG FOR *HIM!*

AND THIS *IS* A BIG ONE!

"BRAVELY KING TEENY APPLIED HIS MIND TO THE STUDY OF THIS ISSUE AND HE DREW CLOSER TO CAP'S FACE TO DO SO..."

KING

"BUT SUDDENLY, CAP OPENED HIS EYES AND THE GOOD KING'S NERVE FELL TO PIECES AS HE FACED THIS GLARING GIANT..."

GULP!

KING

EGAD! LITTLE PEOPLE! TEENY-WEENY PEOPLE!

DISASTER!

CATASTROPHE!

HEY! TAKE IT EASY, LITTLE ONES! I WON'T HURT YOU!

HELP! HELP!

RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

HE'LL EAT US LIKE FLIES!

CALL OUT THE GUARD! CALL OUT THE GUARD!

JUST A MINUTE, PLEASE!

DON'T YOU TOUCH ME! DON'T YOU DARE! HEADS WILL ROLL!

KING

IT'S GOT ME! I'M DOOMED! THE KING IS DEAD! MAKE MY DAUGHTER THE NEW KING -- --ER--QUEEN! FAREWELL, MY SUBJECTS! YOUR KING DIES BRAVELY!

MARKET

KING

HELLO, THERE! MY NAME IS CAPTAIN AMERICA! WHO ARE YOU?

ZOUNDS! THAT THUNDEROUS VOICE! IT SPLIT MY EAR DRUMS!

KING!

I'M SORRY! I'LL KEEP MY VOICE DOWN TO A WHISPER!

THAT'S BETTER! CAPTAIN, YOU HAVE THE HONOR TO BE SPEAKING TO KING TEENY, AND THESE ARE MY SUBJECTS-- THE TEENY-WEENY PEOPLE!

WE HEARD A TERRIBLE CRASH AND FOUND YOU WRECKED IN THAT MACHINE OF YOURS, SO WE CARRIED YOU IN HERE TO MY KINGDOM OF THE TINY WORLD!

KI

"BUT SUDDENLY THIS SERENE SCENE WAS DARKENED BY A CLOUD..."

FOR WHICH I THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY! YOU'VE SAVED MY LIFE!

OH, IT WAS *NOTHING*, CAPTAIN! NOTHING AT *ALL*!

SEE HOW *MODEST* OUR KING IS!

YES--AND WE KNOW HE'S *BRAVE*--

--AND *VALIANT*!

SUCH A KING!

ONE SIDE, PEASANTS! MAKE WAY FOR *PRIME MINISTER GRINKO*, THE PRIDE OF TINY WORLD!

BAH!

WHAP!

WHO'S *THAT* CHARACTER?

AAH! HE'S AN OLD KILL-JOY! WORRIES ABOUT BUDGETS, INVASIONS, AND THINGS LIKE THAT!

I WARN YOU! THIS IS AN *ILL OMEN!* SOMETHING *TERRIBLE* IS GOING TO HAPPEN BECAUSE THIS *MONSTER* CAME HERE!

MONSTER? ME?

OH, SHUSH, GRINKO! YOU'RE AN OLD FUDDY-DUDDY! STOP WORRYING!

FUDDY-DUDDY, AM I? *STOP WORRYING*, EH? ALL MY YEARS OF HARD WORK SHOT TO PIECES! I WARN YOU--DESTROY CAPTAIN AMERICA, OR SOME DISASTER WILL DESTROY *US!*

OH--GO WAIL SOMEWHERE ELSE! I'M TIRED OF YOUR MOANIN' AND GROANIN'! BRING FOOD AND MUSIC FOR OUR HONORED GUEST, OH MY SUBJECTS!

"BUT WHILE THE TEENY-WEENY PEOPLE PREPARED A FESTIVAL FOR CAP, GRINKO MADE OTHER PLANS!"

HMM... I DON'T LIKE THIS *ONE BIT!* JUST WHEN I WAS READY TO KILL KING TEENY AND MAKE MYSELF KING, THIS BIG SLOB HAS TO COME ALONG! I'M NOT THROUGH YET, THOUGH! *WATCH!*

SEE THAT ROCK? WELL, ONLY *I* KNOW THAT IT BLOCKS A TURBULENT STREAM OF WATER! I TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT DISASTER WOULD STRIKE! BUT I *DIDN'T* TELL THEM THAT *I*, AND *NOT* CAPTAIN AMERICA, WOULD CAUSE IT!

P.M.

LIKE *THIS!* I'LL JUST RELEASE ENOUGH WATER TO FLOOD THE CITY-- THEN TELL 'EM TO GET RID OF CAPTAIN AMERICA--OR ELSE! *CUTE, EH? HEH! HEH!*

"EVEN IN THIS PEACEFUL LITTLE WORLD THERE WAS EVIL, AS THIS AMBITIOUS PRIME MINISTER PLANNED TO DESTROY A WHOLE CITY TO FURTHER HIS NEFARIOUS PLOT!"

SWOOSH!

HEE! HEE! HA! HA! HA!

HEE! HEE! HA! HA! HA!

CAPTAIN, MAY I PRESENT MY DAUGHTER, PRINCESS PETITE?

HOW DO YOU DO, PRINCESS?

CHARMED, CAPTAIN! *MY!* YOU'RE A *BIG ONE*, AREN'T YOU?

HELP! *A FLOOD!*

OH,-NOT SO-- *HEY! WHAT'S THAT?*

"ON THE MIDST OF JOY--TRAGEDY! GRINKO'S PLAN RAN SMOOTHLY, AS THE ONRUSH OF WATER THREW THE FESTIVITIES INTO A PANIC!"

SEE? WHAT DID I TELL YOU! A FUDDY-DUDDY, AM I? *HO-HO! HEE! HEE!*

OMIGOSH!

THE DISASTER! IT'S HERE LIKE GRINKO SAID!

HELP! HE WAS RIGHT!

WE SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO HIM!

WHAT GOES ON HERE?

I'VE GOT NO TIME TO TALK THINGS OVER! THAT FLOOD HAS TO BE STOPPED FIRST!

MEN OF TINY WORLD, LISTEN! KING TEENY IS A *TRAITOR!* DESTROY CAPTAIN AMERICA AND MAKE *ME* YOUR KING! *I* CAN STOP THE FLOOD!

YES! DESTROY THEM BOTH!

ARE YOU PEOPLE *MAD* OR SOMETHING? TAKE IT EASY! *LET'S TALK THIS OVER!*

YAH! KING TEENY'S NOT SO SMART!

LONG LIVE KING GRINKO!

CURSES! I DIDN'T PLAN IT THIS WAY!

P.M.

THAT GRINKO IS QUITE A CHARACTER! I'LL BET HE DELIBERATELY STARTED THIS THING JUST TO DISCREDIT THE KING!

"IT WAS EASY FOR CAP TO PLUG UP THE FLOOD!"

"THEN HE RETURNED TO THE SQUARE TO FIND AN AMAZING SIGHT GREETING HIM!"

WELL, EVERYTHING'S OKAY NOW! (ULP!) WHAT'S THIS?

SURRENDER, CAPTAIN AMERICA! KING TEENY AND THE PRINCESS ARE MY PRISONERS! I AM THE NEW KING!

THAT'S A DIRTY TRICK! AND YOU KNOW IT!

FIRE! SHOOT! LET HIM HAVE IT! I, KING GRINKO, HAVE SPOKEN!

KING

"...AND THE WARRIORS RELEASED A TERRIBLE VOLLEY OF ARROWS!"

HEY! CUT IT OUT! IT TICKLES!

KILL HIM! SHOOT HIM! STOP THAT YELLING! I CAN'T HEAR MYSELF GIVING ORDERS!

GRINKO! LOOK OUT!

HE'S GONNA GET YOU!

OOH! I CAN'T LOOK!

KING

(ULP!) OMIGOSH!

C'MERE, LITTLE MAN! YOU'VE HAD A BUSY DAY!

OKAY, GRINKO! TALK, OR I'LL DROP YOU! WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

OOOH! NO! DON'T! I'LL TALK! I STARTED THAT FLOOD! YOU'RE INNOCENT! EVERYBODY'S INNOCENT, EXCEPT ME!

"AND SO, EVERYTHING WAS CLEARED UP! GRINKO WAS PUT IN JAIL AND THE KING FREED!"

THANKS FOR SHOWING THAT SCOUNDREL UP, CAPTAIN! HE WAS ANNOYING!

A PLEASURE, YOUR MAJESTY! AND NOW I MUST BE GOING!

MAY I ASK A FAVOR OF YOU? IT'S ALWAYS BEEN OUR FEAR THAT WE WOULD BE DISCOVERED BY THE OUTSIDE WORLD--AND EXPOSED TO ITS NOISY LIFE! *PLEASE* PROTECT OUR SECRET, CAPTAIN AMERICA!

CERTAINLY, YOUR MAJESTY! YOUR SECRET IS SAFE WITH ME! I MAY TELL THE WORLD ABOUT YOU, BUT I WON'T DISCLOSE *WHERE* YOU ARE!

"...AND SO CAPTAIN AMERICA LEFT THIS AMAZING LITTLE WORLD, WITH ITS TINY PEOPLE--A MODERN GULLIVER IN A REAL LILLIPUT!"

SO YOU SEE, IT *IS* POSSIBLE FOR THESE THINGS TO EXIST! MY FRIEND, CAPTAIN AMERICA, NEVER DISCLOSED THE LOCATION OF THE KINGDOM OF *TINY WORLD!*

PROFESSOR ROGERS, I'M CONVINCED! MY! THAT CAPTAIN AMERICA MUST BE QUITE A *MAN!* MAY I MEET HIM SOME DAY?

HARDLY LIKELY, MISS MASON! YOU SEE, HE APPEARS ONLY WHEN THERE'S A REAL URGENT NEED FOR HIM! CLASS DISMISSED!

WELL, THERE *IS* A NEED! YOU SEE, I HAVE NO DATE TO TAKE ME TO THE JUNIOR PROM! HOWEVER--*YOU'LL* DO IF YOU CAN'T CONTACT *HIM!* YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT HIM--THERE MUST BE VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU!

WELL, TA-TA, CAP--I MEAN, *PROFESSOR!*

HMMM... NOW WHAT D'YOU SUPPOSE SHE MEANS BY *THAT?*

THE END

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CAPTAIN AMERICA

IN

"NO MAN IS AN ISLAND!"

SAVE ME, CAPTAIN AMERICA! SAVE ME! CAN'T YOU SEE THEM? CAN'T YOU HEAR THEM? THEY'RE ALL AROUND ME! ***THEY'RE HAUNTING*** ME! WHAT CAN I DO? ***HELP ME! PLEASE!***

NOBODY COMES TO SEE ME! NOBODY EVER DID! WHAT DO ***YOU*** WANT?

NO! NO! THEY TRIED TO TELL ME! BUT I WAS A FOOL! I WOULDN'T LISTEN!

JOHN! CAN'T YOU TRUST ME EVEN A ***LITTLE?***

IT'S THAT TOM MORLEY! THE WAY YOU LOOK AT HIM!

JOHN! NO! WAIT! LISTEN TO ME! PLEASE LISTEN!

IT'S TOO LATE! ***TOO LATE!***

3562

THIS IS A STORY OF A ***MAN*** AND HIS ***MIND!*** YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE IT! AND I WOULDN'T HAVE EITHER, EXCEPT THAT I ***SAW*** THE MAN TO WHOM THESE AMAZING THINGS HAPPENED! I HEARD THE STORY FROM HIS ***OWN LIPS!*** HE HAD COMMITTED A CRIME AND ACTUALLY HAD ESCAPED HIS PUNISHMENT...FOR A TIME... BUT LET ME START FROM THE BEGINNING!

I MET HIM IN THE BAHAMAS--A KILLER WHO WAS BEING SLOWLY, MOST TERRIBLY PUNISHED! YOU'LL SEE THAT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ***EASIER*** FOR HIM HAD HE MET ***SWIFT*** DEATH IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR! ANYWAY, HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED...

I WENT FISHING ONE BLAZING, HOT DAY!

"THE SUNLIGHT POURED DOWN FROM A CLOUDLESS SKY--MOLTEN GOLD ON THE GLASSY CARRIBBEAN! THE LITTLE KEYS ALONG HERE, MOST OF THEM TINY SPOTS OF SAND WITH A FEW PALMS, LAY AROUND ME, SHIMMERING UNREAL IN THE HEAT!"

NO LUCK HERE!

"I MOVED ON TO TRY ANOTHER PLACE! I HAD COME QUITE A WAY FROM NASSAU, WHEN SUDDENLY, MY OUTBOARD MOTOR COUGHED AND QUIT!"

SPUT!

SPUT!

NOW WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH *YOU?*

"I COULDN'T GET IT GOING AGAIN! AS I GAZED AROUND, IT SEEMED AS THOUGH I WERE THE ONLY LIVING THING IN THIS EMPTINESS OF SKY AND WATER!"

"USING MY LITTLE EMERGENCY PADDLE, I GUIDED THE BOAT TO SHORE!"

A THREAD OF ***SMOKE!*** MUST BE A HOUSE THERE!

THAT STORM IS COMING UP FAST!

"THEN I SAW THE LITTLE SHACK! IT WAS PATCHED AND TATTERED, OLD AND DECREPIT WITH THE YEARS! SILENCE BROODED OVER IT! NOTHING STIRRED, SAVE THAT DRIFTING THREAD OF SMOKE!"

"AND THEN, A MAN CAME TO THE DOORWAY! HE DIDN'T GREET ME! HE JUST STOOD GAZING-- APATHETIC, INCURIOUS!"

MY MOTOR BROKE DOWN! MAY I STAY HERE UNTIL THE STORM LETS UP?

YES... GUESS SO!

WELL!

HELLO, THERE!

"THE SINGLE ROOM WAS A LITTER OF NEGLECT; BUT NO ONE SEEING IT COULD FEEL SCORNFUL! THERE WAS PATHOS HERE AND TRAGEDY--THE WRECK OF A HUMAN BEING! I FELT IT AT ONCE! BESIDE ME, MY HOST STOOD SILENT, AS THOUGH AT A LOSS FOR WHAT TO DO OR SAY!"

"I SAT DOWN, AND FOR A MOMENT HE STOOD MOTIONLESS, AS THOUGH TRYING TO COLLECT HIS SCATTERED THOUGHTS--AS THOUGH HAVING A VISITOR WAS SO STUPENDOUS A THING IT NUMBED HIM! I TRIED TO MAKE CONVERSATION!"

MAY I SIT DOWN?

AN OUTBOARD MOTOR CAN GET MOODY SOMETIMES! MINE QUIT COLD ON ME!

"THERE WAS A PEAL OF THUNDER OUTSIDE, CLOSER NOW! HE DIDN'T SEEM TO HEAR IT! HE JUST GAZED VACANTLY DOWN AT ME! THEN, ABRUPTLY, HE SPOKE!"

GUESS YOU HAVE PRETTY BAD STORMS IN SUMMER! I'M GLAD TO HAVE SHELTER! MR.--ER...

NOBODY EVER COMES HERE! *WHAT DO YOU WANT?*

"I COULD SEE NOW THAT, THOUGH HE LOOKED MAYBE SEVENTY, HE COULD HAVE BEEN NO MORE THAN FIFTY--AND HE WAS ILL, MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY! PERHAPS DESPERATELY ILL!"

NOBODY COMES TO SEE ME! NOBODY EVER *DID!* WHAT DO *YOU* WANT?

"I GOT HIM TO SIT DOWN, FINALLY! AND I TRIED TO CALM WHATEVER FEAR WAS WITHIN HIM! PERHAPS THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THE WAY I TALKED THAT MADE HIM TRUST ME! HIS NAME, HE TOLD ME AT LAST, WAS JOHN BARTON!"

BELIEVE ME, MR. BARTON, WHATEVER'S THE MATTER, I'LL HELP YOU IF I CAN!

"THEN SUDDENLY, LIKE A BURSTING DAM, HE STARTED TO TALK--RAMBLING LIKE A DEPRAVED BEING!!"

JUST TALKIN' TO *SOMEBODY*--MAYBE--AN' WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? I'M GOING TO *DIE*--MAYBE SOON! ANYHOW...

"THE STORM WAS BURSTING OUTSIDE NOW! RAIN WAS PELTING AGAINST THE LITTLE TIN ROOF AND SURGING INTO THE WINDOWS! I GOT UP AND CLOSED THE BROKEN SHUTTERS THE BEST WAY I COULD!"

QUITE A STORM--BOTH OUTSIDE AND HERE IN THIS MAN'S MIND! WHAT *CAN* ALL THIS BE ABOUT?

"THE LITTLE SHACK TREMBLED WITH THE PUFFS OF THE WIND AS I SILENTLY SAT LISTENING TO A PATHETIC STORY OF A PASSAGE DOWNWARD--THE HEALTH AND STRENGTH OF PROMISING YOUTH, DOWN TO THIS WRECKAGE THAT WAS HERE BEFORE ME!"

GENTLEMEN OF THE GRADUATION CLASS...AS I SEE YOU HERE TODAY GRADUATING FROM ONE LIFE, COMMENCING ANOTHER...

SOMEHOW NOW, I FEEL LIKE TALKING! YOU ARE THE FIRST HUMAN I HAVE SEEN IN A LONG TIME, AND I MUST TELL YOU OR I'LL GO *MAD!* MY THOUGHTS GO BACK--BACK MANY YEARS TO MY GRADUATION DAY...

"JOHN BARTON WAS A DARK-HAIRED, GOOD-LOOKING BOY--AN ORPHAN! HE HAD GRADUATED WITH HIGH HONORS!"

WE'VE BEEN PROUD OF YOU, BARTON! KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US! WE'RE EXPECTING GREAT THINGS OF YOU!

OH, THANK YOU, SIR!

"HE GOT A JOB WITHOUT DIFFICULTY!"

YOUR COLLEGE SPEAKS VERY HIGHLY OF YOU, BARTON!. WE'RE GLAD TO HAVE YOU JOIN US!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH! I'LL CERTAINLY DO MY *BEST!*

AJAX ENGINEER CORPORATI

"YOUNG BARTON PLANNED GREAT THINGS FOR HIS FUTURE! IT WOULD BE A BRILLIANT AND SUCCESSFUL ONE... THEN HE MET THE GIRL OF HIS DREAMS, ANNE JOHNSON, AND THEY BECAME ENGAGED!

OH, JOHN DEAR! I'M THE LUCKIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD!

DON'T BE SILLY! *I'M* THE LUCKY ONE!

"ANNE JOHNSON WAS A STENOGRAPHER, THE SOLE SUPPORTER OF AN ILL, WIDOWED MOTHER!"

I'M SO *GLAD!* I'VE HEARD GREAT THINGS OF YOU, JOHN!

"ALL SO PERFECT! BUT THERE WAS ONE NIGHT AT A DANCE..."

SORRY, JOHN! BUT WE CAN'T LET YOU MONOPOLIZE HER, YOU KNOW!

"YOUNG BARTON DIDN'T FIND HIMSELF ANOTHER DANCING PARTNER! HE JUST STOOD GLOWERING WITH STRANGE, BLACK THOUGHTS THAT HE HARDLY UNDERSTOOD!"

SO *THAT'S* THE WAY IT IS! I KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH *THAT* SORT OF THING!

"AND WHEN PRESENTLY ANNE WAS ALONE WITH HIM..."

JOHN! THAT LOOK IN YOUR EYES! IT ***FRIGHTENS*** ME!

DON'T YOU EVER DO A THING LIKE THAT AGAIN-- LEAVING ***ME*** TO DANCE WITH ***SOMEONE ELSE!*** I ***WON'T*** STAND FOR IT, I TELL YOU!

"THEY FIXED UP THE QUARREL, OF COURSE, BUT THERE WERE OTHER INCIDENTS LIKE IT! ANNE DID HER BEST TO COPE WITH THEM!"

YOU'RE MAKING US BOTH SO ***MISERABLE***, JOHN DEAR! I LOVE YOU SO ***MUCH!*** CAN'T YOU TRUST ME EVEN A ***LITTLE?***

IT'S THAT TOM MORLEY-- THE WAY YOU ALWAYS LOOK AT HIM!

"ANNE'S MOTHER HAD GONE TO A SANITARIUM SEVERAL MILES OUT IN THE COUNTRY! ANNE WAS LIVING ALONE NOW! AND THERE WAS ONE WEEK WHEN THE AJAX COMPANY SENT BARTON ON A TRIP!"

DO YOUR BEST WITH IT, JOHN!

I WILL! I'LL BE BACK SATURDAY!

"HE HAD TOLD ANNE HE'D RETURN SATURDAY! HE WAS ABLE TO GET BACK FRIDAY! AND FRIDAY EVENING HE WENT TO HER BOARDING HOUSE TO SURPRISE HER!"

THEN SHE GOT ANOTHER CALL AN' PRETTY SOON A BIG RED CAR CAME FOR HER! AN' THEN SHE TOLD ME...

"BUT HE DIDN'T STOP TO LISTEN! DAZED WITH HIS BLACK THOUGHTS, HE RUSHED OUT INTO THE RAINY NIGHT!"

NO, SHE WENT OUT ABOUT AN HOUR AGO, MR. BARTON! SHE HAD A PHONE CALL-- SEEMED PRETTY UPSET, LOOKED LIKE TO ME! ALL ***EXCITED,*** ANYWAYS!

TOM MORLEY'S BIG MAROON SPORTS CAR! GONE WITH MORLEY, BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T EXPECT ***ME*** BACK TONIGHT!

WELL! ***LAN' SAKES!***

"UNGOVERNABLE ANGER! UNREASONABLE, INSANE JEALOUSY! HUMAN DEFECTS IN JOHN BARTON'S CHARACTER! HE COULD NOT COPE WITH THEM! THEY MASTERED *HIM* NOW!"

"SURELY HE HAD NO PLANS--JUST WILD, TORTURING THOUGHTS AS HE WAITED... AND WAITED! MIDNIGHT CAME! THEN, ONE O'CLOCK... TWO O'CLOCK! HE WAS UP IN THE VESTIBULE OF ANNE'S HOUSE NOW...JUST WAITING...

SURE! THE MINUTE I GO AWAY, SHE'S OUT WITH SOMEONE ELSE! PLAYING ME FOR A *FOOL! THAT'S WHAT SHE'S DOING!*

I'LL WAIT! SHE'S GOT TO COME BACK--AND I'LL WAIT! *I'LL WAIT!*

"HORRIBLE THOUGHTS TORTURED HIM--AND THEN SHE CAME..."

SURE! *TOM MORLEY! I WAS RIGHT!*

"BARTON COULDN'T HEAR WHAT THEY WERE SAYING! IF HE HAD ONLY JOINED THEM THEN! BUT HE DIDN'T!"

OH, I'M SO SORRY! YOU'RE SURE YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT, ANNE?

YES, I'LL BE ALL RIGHT! THANKS, TOM, FOR EVERY-THING...GOOD NIGHT!

"A YOUNG COUPLE WAS PASSING! THEY SAW TOM MORLEY CLIMB INTO HIS CAR AND DRIVE AWAY!

GOOD NIGHT, ANNE!

"AND A MOMENT LATER, IN THE DARK VESTIBULE..."

WHA--? JOHN!

HOME AT LAST, EH?

COULDN'T WAIT TILL I LEFT, EH? WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM--A *FOOL?* YOU HAVE DATES WITH TOM MORLEY WHEN I'M NOT AROUND!

JOHN! JOHN-- WAIT! LISTEN TO ME!

"JOHN BARTON'S ANGER KNEW NO BOUNDS! HE RAGED IN FURY AT ANNE, AND SHE, FRIGHTENED, DREW BACK UNTIL SHE TRIPPED AND FELL HEADLONG DOWN THE STEEP FLIGHT OF STAIRS!"

"THEN WITH THE THING THAT HAD BEEN THE GIRL HE LOVED, *LYING THERE DEAD*, JOHN BARTON FLED AWAY THROUGH THE RAIN!"

"JOHN BARTON, MURDERER! HE WAS DAZED, BLURRED WITH TERROR--A FUGITIVE, WITH EVERYTHING IN HIS WORLD SUDDENLY TAKEN FROM HIM!"

WHAT HAVE I DONE?

JOHN... OHHHHHHHH-H

WHAT HAVE I DONE? I'VE KILLED HER! OH, MY *TEMPER! MY AWFUL TEMPER!*

"AND NOW, MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS AFTERWARD--WITH THE STORM LASHING THE LITTLE SHACK, I SAT AWED AND SILENT--LISTENING TO JOHN BARTON, OLD AND TIRED AND BROKEN, AS HE TOLD ME!"

"A SKULKING FUGITIVE... HE DIDN'T DARE STAY LONG IN ONE PLACE! HE WORKED AT WHATEVER HE COULD--SUSPICIOUS, TERRORIZED BY ANYONE WHO LOOKED AT HIM TWICE!--ALWAYS ON THE MOVE!"

IT'S HARD REMEMBERING JUST WHAT HAPPENED TO ME AFTER THAT! JUST DRIFTING...

HE'S AFTER ME! I KNOW IT!

HEY, YOU!

"ALWAYS IT WAS THE TERRIBLE LONELINESS... HIMSELF AGAINST THE WORLD!"

IT'S LIKE I'M ON A DESERT ISLAND! JUST ME--ALONE! NO FRIENDS, NO HOME!

BEER 5¢

"THEN HE TOOK A FLING AT PETTY CRIMES! HE WAS NEVER CAUGHT! IT WAS AS THOUGH FATE WERE DETERMINED TO PUNISH HIM IN ANOTHER WAY! ONCE, WITH A STROKE OF LUCK, HE MADE A BIG HAUL!"

MORE THAN *TWENTY THOUSAND* CASH! ENOUGH FOR *LIFE*, IF I GET AWAY WITH THIS!

"THEN WITH HIS CASH, HE DRIFTED DOWN TO THE BAHAMAS! HE HAD GROWN A BEARD NOW--HIS HAIR WAS GRAYING, THOUGH HE WASN'T YET FORTY! HE FOUND THIS DESERTED LITTLE SHACK, OUT HERE IN THE EMPTY WILDS OF SAND AND WATER..."

"JUST A LONELY OLD HERMIT! NOBODY GAVE HIM A SECOND THOUGHT DOWN IN NASSAU, WHERE HE WENT OCCASIONALLY TO BUY SUPPLIES! HE KEPT HIS REMAINING CASH HIDDEN IN HIS SHACK!"

THEY'LL *NEVER* FIND ME NOW! THEY CAN LOOK EVERY PLACE THEY LIKE! I'M *SAFE! HAW!* I PUT ONE OVER ON THEM! THIS IS *ONE* CRIME THAT WON'T BE PUNISHED!

"BUT IT WAS THE LONELINESS! YEARS DRIFTED BY AS JOHN BARTON GREW OLDER... JUST AN OLD MAN, LIKE A LITTLE DESERT ISLAND, SURROUNDED BY HIS POUNDING THOUGHTS! NO MAN IS AN ISLAND, NO MAN CAN LIVE ALONE--EVEN WITH HIS THOUGHTS! HE THOUGHT MORE OF ANNE NOW--AND OF THE LIFE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN FOR HIM AND HER..."

"THEN ONE NIGHT, WHEN HE HAD TAKEN HIS LAUNCH AND GONE TO NASSAU TO BUY A FEW NECESSITIES..."

THAT MAN-- THERE'S SOMETHING *FAMILIAR* ABOUT HIM! *WHY, IT'S--*

HELLO THERE, TOM!

TOM MORLEY! WELL, WELL--

WHY, HELLO, GEORGE! MEET MY WIFE AND DAUGHTER!

"THE WATCHING, LISTENING BARTON SAT IN THE SHADOWS WITH HIS HEART POUNDING, AS THE PARTY CHATTED! PRESENTLY THE YOUNG GIRL WAS SAYING...

YES, I DO! I JUST LOVE TO READ ABOUT CRIMES! MR. GREEN, DID YOU KNOW THAT DADDY WAS MIXED UP IN A *MURDER* ONCE?

IT WAS BEFORE BETTY WAS BORN! I KNEW A GIRL -- HER NAME WAS ANNE! AWFULLY SWEET, GENTLE, LITTLE THING -- VERY PRETTY! SHE WAS ENGAGED TO A FELLOW WHO WAS INSANELY JEALOUS!

I DIDN'T DARE GO NEAR ANNE AFTER SHE GOT ENGAGED TO THIS FELLOW NAMED BARTON! I HAD A CHANCE ONE DAY TO DO HIM A BUSINESS FAVOR! I PHONED ANNE TO ASK HER WHERE I COULD REACH HIM!

I FOUND ANNE TERRIBLY UPSET! SHE HAD JUST HAD A CALL FROM HER MOTHER'S PHYSICIAN! HER MOTHER HAD HAD A HEART ATTACK, AND I DROVE HER OUT TO THE SANITARIUM -- WAITED THERE WITH HER! THEN HER MOTHER DIED AND I DROVE HER BACK HOME!

NO! NO!

"WITH WHAT TERRIBLE THOUGHTS BARTON LISTENED, NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW! THEN, SLINKING IN THE SHADOWS, HE STUMBLED FROM THE LITTLE CAFÉ OUT INTO THE LONELY NIGHT..."

THE LANDLADY TRIED TO TELL ME! ANNE TRIED TO TELL ME! BUT I WAS A FOOL! I WAS A FOOL! I WOULDN'T LISTEN!

"AND ON HIS HORRIBLE LITTLE ISLAND, MORE INTERMINABLE YEARS DRAGGED BY THE BROODING BARTON! THE FULL MEASURE OF HIS REMORSE WAS ON HIM NOW! HIS HEALTH WAS FAILING! HE SAT THROUGH THE DAYS, BARELY BOTHERING TO KEEP ALIVE! AND THEN I CAME..."

BECAUSE SHE WENT TO HER DYING MOTHER -- I--I KILLED HER! BUT I'VE BEEN ***PUNISHED*** FOR IT NOW! YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT! ***I'VE BEEN PUNISHED FOR IT,*** CAPTAIN AMERICA!

YES, I CAN UNDERSTAND!

IF ONLY SHE COULD KNOW HOW SORRY I AM! IF I ONLY KNEW SHE HAD FORGIVEN ME -- MAYBE I COULD HAVE PEACE FROM MY CONSCIENCE! WAIT! DO YOU ***HEAR*** IT? ***THAT VOICE!***

"HE RAN AROUND THE ROOM LIKE A CRAZED ANIMAL, TRYING TO SHUT OUT THE VOICE ONLY ***HE*** COULD HEAR!"

GO AWAY! GO AWAY! LEAVE ME IN PEACE!

"OUTSIDE THE TROPIC STORM HAD REACHED ITS PEAK OF WILDNESS AND INTENSITY!"

"WHILE INSIDE THE HUT, THE OLD MAN STRUGGLED WITH THE VOICE OF HIS CONSCIENCE, WHICH WAS TO HIM A LIVING SOUND!"

"BUT I COULD GIVE HIM NO CONSOLATION! THEN, SUDDENLY, BEFORE I COULD STOP HIM, HE HAD DASHED OUT OF THE CABIN INTO THE STORM!"

I'VE PAID! I'VE SUFFERED ENOUGH!

EASY, MR. BARTON! IT'S ONLY THE WIND!

I'VE GOT TO STOP THAT VOICE!

BARTON! COME BACK!

"SOME SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH HAD POSSESSED BARTON! I TRIED TO FOLLOW HIM, BUT MY ENERGIES WERE ALMOST WASTED AGAINST THE STORM! HE HAD COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED!"

"THEN AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD COME, THE TROPICAL STORM ABATED! IN THE STILLNESS THAT FOLLOWED, I COULD SEE BARTON'S BODY LYING IN THE SAND AHEAD OF ME!"

BARTON! BARTON! WHERE ARE YOU?

"BY THE TIME I REACHED HIM, BARTON WAS DEAD! HE HAD DIED THERE ON THE SANDS OF THE ISLAND THAT HAD BEEN HIS REFUGE FROM THE WORLD, AND HIS PRISON!"

"BUT STRANGELY, WHEN I EXAMINED HIM MORE CLOSELY, THERE WAS A LOOK OF QUIET CONTENTMENT ON THE FACE OF THE OLD MAN! WHO CAN SAY WHAT HE WAS THINKING AS HE DIED! BUT I LIKE TO THINK THAT IN HIS FINAL MOMENTS, HE FOUND THE PEACE HE HAD BEEN SEEKING--AND THE VOICE OF HIS CONSCIENCE HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD FINALLY PAID THE PRICE OF HIS CRIME!"

THE END

LETS PLAY DETECTIVE

STARRING DETECTIVE SKIP McCOY

"A BURIAL FOR BENNY!"

3762

"BENNY THE BANDIT," SMALL TIME HOODLUM, IS SUMMONED BEFORE "THE BOSS!"

BENNY, THE BOYS TELL ME YOU HAVE BEEN SPEAKING TO THE POLICE! YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO BOYS WHO TELLS TALES OUT OF SCHOOL?

YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG, BOSS!

I THINK WE HIT BENNY TOO HARD, BOSS--HE'S--HE'S DEAD!

HMM...I DIDN'T COUNT ON THAT! BUT I HAVE AN IDEA!

AND SOON AFTER, SKIP McCOY INVESTIGATES THE SO-CALLED ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF BENNY THE BANDIT!

IT'S LIKE I SAID, BENNY LEANED A LITTLE TOO FAR OUT OF THE WINDOW!

WHAT ARE THESE BOYS TRYING TO PULL?

SKIP EXAMINES THE BODY CLOSELY!

HMM...THIS IS IT!

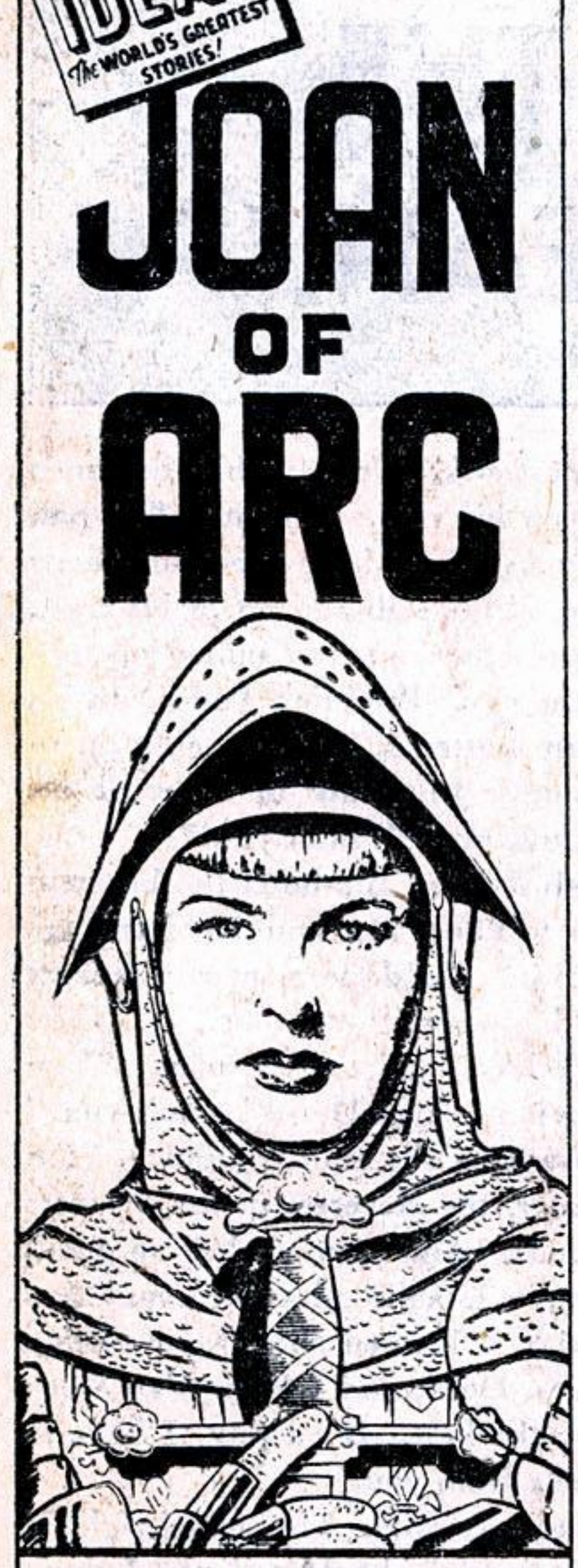
BOYS, WE'RE GOING DOWNTOWN--I'M BOOKING YOU FOR THE MURDER OF BENNY!

LATER, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

OKAY, YOU WIN--WE KILLED HIM! BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT?

BENNY'S EYE GLASSES--THEY WERE BROKEN, BUT I COULDN'T FIND ANY PARTICLES OF THE BROKEN GLASS--WHICH TOLD ME BENNY WAS GIVEN THE ONCE-OVER AND THEN THROWN OUT OF THE WINDOW!

THE END

IDEAL
THE WORLD'S GREATEST STORIES!
JOAN OF ARC

THRILL TO THE TRUE STORY OF FRANCE'S GREATEST HEROINE
IDEAL COMICS

STAMP NEWS

By KENT B. STILES

Notwithstanding the deluge of special stamps earlier announced at Washington for release during 1948 the Post Office Department has added five. The revised schedule commits the Department to at least fifteen such adhesives from January through December—and if you are looking for a reason for this generous output you can reflect that this is an election year! The more persons who are pleased before November arrives, the more votes the Democratic candidates should, theoretically, receive. Or so some politicians seem to think!

Congress enacted a bill calling for a stamp to commemorate the Swedish Pioneer Centennial being observed in the American Mid-West this Summer. President Truman promptly vetoed it. Shortly thereafter he changed his mind and directed the stamp be printed—and it appeared, a 5c in dark blue and light blue, on June 4. The design shows a Swedish pioneer moving Westward with a covered wagon a century ago. Six stars at left and six stars at right represent twelve States in which the Swedish immigrants settled.

The second additional stamp announced is one to honor Clara Barton (1821-1912), who was the first president of the American Red Cross.

The third promised item will mark the centennial of the creating of Oregon Territory, from which were carved the States of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming.

Recalling a century of "peace and cooperation" between the United States and Canada will be a "special" to appear probably in August. The two countries have been at peace longer than a century, so what the stamp will specifically recall is the building of the first suspension bridge across the Niagara gorge between Niagara Falls, N. Y., and Niagara Falls, Ontario, in 1848.

The fifth "special" announced is one in connection with the "100 Year March of Progress" celebration to be held in Oklahoma in memory of the arrival of the Five Civilized Tribes—Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, Choctaw, Chickasaw—a century ago to settle land of which today's Oklahoma was then a part. This stamp will appear in August.

Also of special interest to American collectors is Salvador's series honoring Franklin D. Roosevelt, as the designs bring likenesses of three persons not hitherto honored: Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, former Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Canada's Premier William Lyon Mackenzie King.

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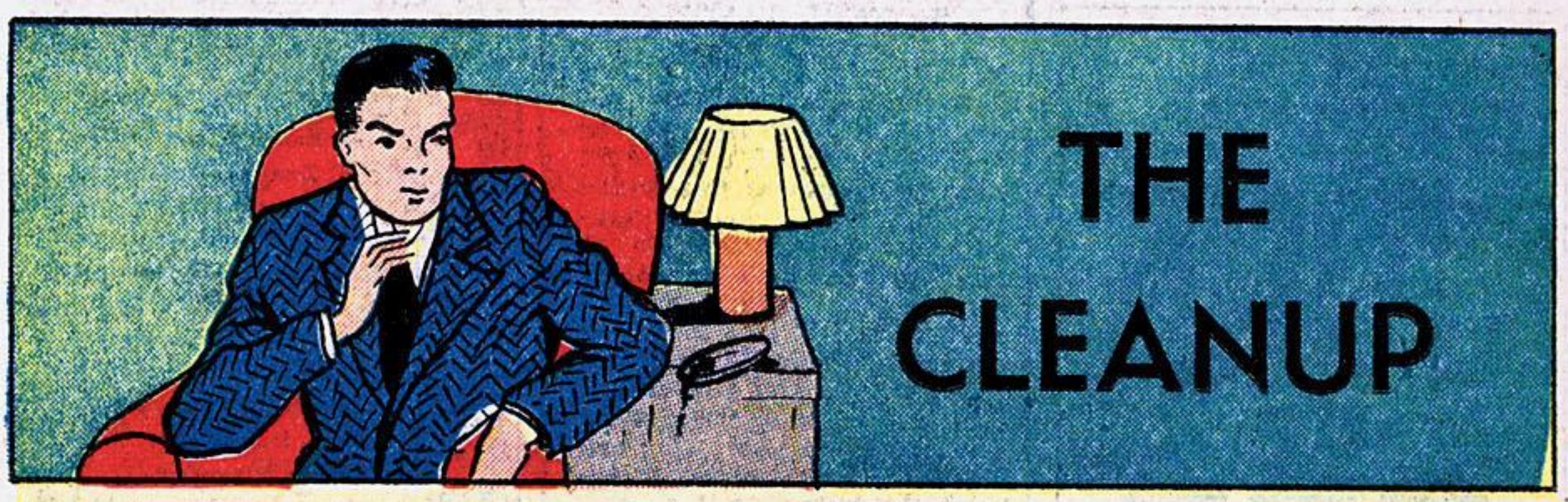

THE CLEANUP

TODD HUNTER, a young, but expert, diamond cutter, turned his car off the state highway and started down a country road. Todd was a little nervous. He was taking twenty thousand dollars worth of diamonds to a private client, and he knew his activities were being closely watched by the underworld gangs specializing in the robbery of precious stones.

He looked at his wristwatch and smiled. The watch had an extra thick case because Todd carried his diamonds in a little compartment built in behind its movements.

Suddenly finding himself behind a hay wagon that took up most of the narrow country road, Todd slowed down and honked. The wagon moved over, and Todd shifted into first and pulled up beside it. But in that instant the wagon veered over in front of the car. Swinging the steering wheel hard, Todd skidded into a ditch.

He jumped angrily out of his car and strode over to the wagon to tell the driver what he thought of him. But his eyes bulged in astonishment as three men leaped out of the hay, each with a gun in his hand.

"Reach, Hunter!" one of them snarled. Todd's hands went skyward.

"You know me!" exclaimed Todd, unable to hide his surprise.

"Sure," snapped the largest of the men. "Also, we know you bought and cut twenty thousand bucks worth of diamonds for a Mr. Van Dorn. So I'm afraid we're going to want the pleasure of your company."

Two men hopped into the front seat of Todd's car and drove it out of the ditch while the driver of the hay wagon pulled his vehicle off the road and joined the gang. With his gun the big man motioned Todd to get into the rear seat of the car. Todd got in, the big man and wagon driver followed him, and the car pulled away.

Todd felt almost sick. To have his diamonds stolen would mean his ruin. And it galled him to think that crooks would have those diamonds that had in them all the skill and art of his craft.

After two hours of riding they pulled up to a swank hotel in the city. Prodding Todd with his gun, the big man muttered, "We're going up to a hotel room now. Just walk in front of us. And no funny stuff, or we'll blast you!"

On the seventh floor of the hotel the big man opened the door to Room 712, and Todd and the four men stepped in. Todd saw a smartly dressed man sitting in a big chair.

"Oh, hello, Hunter," greeted the man. "You have the diamonds for Van Dorn, haven't you?" Todd didn't answer so the man continued, "I'm Charles Dorchester, the cleverest in the business of lifting diamonds. And your work is so good, Hunter, that you've established a fine reputation in the underworld. I learned about your cutting diamonds for Van Dorn, and I knew Van Dorn would want only the best. It's a pity I have to take the diamonds from you."

Todd fought to stay calm. He looked right at Dorchester. "Suppose I should tell you I don't have them with me?"

Dorchester looked bored. He stared at Todd's wristwatch. "Hunter, I've been in this racket for years. I know you diamond cutters carry your diamonds on your person, and I would judge by the thickness of your watchcase that *you* carry them inside it."

Todd colored, and Dorchester grinned. Todd realized he was up against the smartest in the business.

Suddenly a knock was heard at the door. The men looked at each other. "Who could that be?" murmured Dorchester, but he got up and opened the door cautiously. A girl stood there.

"The chambermaid, sir," she said. "I have to clean your room."

"Oh, come back some other time," said Dorchester impatiently.

"But, sir, I've tried to get in here for two days. Someone always sends me away. I'll have to report to the manager that I can't ever get into the room."

Dorchester didn't want any suspicion aroused about his room so he decided to let the girl in. "All right, come in and clean up, but make it snappy."

The girl stepped in. Dorchester hurried over to the back of Todd's chair, and Todd felt something prick the back of his neck. Leaning down, Dorchester whispered, "Glad you sat down, Hunter. I have a jackknife concealed in my hand, and the blade is against your neck. One move out of you, and you're a goner!"

All the men sat down and began talking among themselves. One took out a pack of cigarettes. Todd looked at him and was offered one, which he quickly lit, inhaling deeply. He watched the chambermaid as she vacuumed, desperately trying to think of a way to escape. Flicking the ashes from his cigarette into the ash stand beside his chair, he found himself staring at the stand, chock-full of butts and ashes. Suddenly he'd formulated a daring plan.

He hurriedly finished his cigarette and leaning forward in his chair, took his time as he snuffed it out in the stand. As he settled back in the chair, his hand hit the stand. It rocked, and he grabbed it as it fell to the floor. The ashes and butts spilled out on to the carpet. The chambermaid rushed over with the vacuum cleaner while Todd apologized. But she just said, "Oh, that's all right, sir. I'll clean it right up." She quickly ran the vacuum over the butts and ashes, finished the rest of the room, and left.

Impatient now, Dorchester growled, "All right, Hunter, open up that watchcase, and let's have the diamonds."

Todd grinned, "I told you before I didn't have them." He took off his wristwatch and slid back a tiny movable piece at the side of the built-in compartment. "See?" he gloated. "It's empty!"

Dorchester snatched the watch from him and smashed it on the table. The works sprang apart, but no diamonds appeared. Dorchester shouted, "Muss him up, boys, but good!"

The four men and Todd leaped up at the same time. Todd picked up a chair and hurled it through the window. Then he swung at one of the men. The man hit the floor, but the others battered Todd into a corner though Todd was fighting viciously. Staying out of the fight, Dorchester just kept yelling, "He can't outsmart me! Beat him up, and then search him! I'm sure he's got the diamonds on him."

Suddenly the hotel door burst open, and two policemen rushed in. The gang turned from Todd and found they were looking into the policemen's guns. "What's going on here?" cried one of the policemen. "Throwing chairs out of the window and fighting!"

Talking fast, Todd told the policemen the gang were diamond thieves, and one of them hurried to the phone to summon the patrol wagon.

Dorchester was still glaring at Todd. "What did you do with those diamonds, Hunter? I was positive they were in that oversize watchcase of yours."

Smiling, Todd stepped out into the hall, found the chambermaid who had cleaned the room, and asked her to bring her vacuum cleaner in. Then he undid the vacuum cleaner bag and dumped the dirt inside on to the floor. Probing carefully, he found his five diamonds. Dorchester turned purple.

"You see, my friend," Todd snickered, "I *did* have the diamonds in my watchcase. But when I put out my cigarette, I released the lock at the side of the compartment holding the diamonds, and the diamonds fell into the ash stand. Then I—accidentally, shall we say?—knocked over the stand, and the ashes, butts and diamonds fell onto the floor. The ashes covered up the diamonds, and the chambermaid picked everything up with her vacuum." Dorchester groaned.

"Pretty work," commented one of the policemen.

"Thanks," said Todd. "I don't think I'm needed any more now so I'm going back to my shop and lock these diamonds in my safe till I can get them to my client." Then looking at Dorchester, "I hope your jail sentence is a stiff one." And he left for his shop.

THE END.

THE HUMAN TORCH

TORCH! GET THOSE CROOKS! TURN ON YOUR FLAME! IT'S THE *ONLY* WAY!

NO, SUN GIRL! I CAN'T! I PROMISED *I WOULDN'T TURN ON MY FLAME POWER!*

YAAH! LET'S SEE HOW GOOD YOU ARE WITHOUT YOUR FLAME! A PROMISE IS A PROMISE, YOU KNOW!

LET'S GO! HE'LL *NEVER* STOP US--*NOW!*

3390

THE HUMAN TORCH CANNOT TURN ON HIS FLAME! THAT IS HIS BARGAIN... BUT... CAN HE STICK TO IT WHEN HIS LIFE IS THREATENED... WHEN THOSE HE LOVES ARE THREATENED? DANGER AND ADVENTURE ARE SIDE-BY-SIDE IN THIS

"BARGAIN of DEATH!"

THE HUMAN TORCH BRINGS HIS "FIRE SHOW" TO A BLAZING FINISH IN THE CHILDREN'S WARD OF GOOD HEART HOSPITAL...

AND THIS WINDS UP THE PERFORMANCE!

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

HOORAY FOR TORCH!

YOU WERE SWELL, TORCH! BUT I OFTEN WONDER WHAT YOU'D DO *WITHOUT* YOUR FLAMES!

SUN GIRL, ARE YOU INTIMATING I'D BE *USELESS* WITHOUT THE ABILITY TO FLAME?

NOT EXACTLY! BUT IT WOULD BE TOUGHER IF YOU WERE TO HANDLE A CASE ON *EQUAL ODDS!*

MAYBE! I TELL YOU WHAT! I'LL DO IT NEXT CASE, AND EVERY TIME I FLAME, I'LL DONATE *$1,000* TO THE GOOD HEART HOSPITAL! HOW'S *THAT?*

SO THE TORCH AGREES ON A PACT... WILL HE REGRET HIS RASH PROMISE, OR...?

AGREED! BUT DON'T BE STINGY IF YOU *HAVE* TO FLAME!

HA! THIS SHOULD BE SOME TEST FOR MY *WILL POWER!*

SPECIAL DELIVERY FOR HUMAN TORCH!

WHAT'S THIS? ALREADY EVENTS ARE SHAPING UP TO TEST HIS ABILITY!

SAY! IT'S FROM THE WARDEN OF STATE PRISON, ON BEHALF OF DAN PATCHER!

PATCHER? WASN'T HE THE MAN YOU CAPTURED EIGHT YEARS AGO FOR THE LUBIN PLANT ROBBERY?

ROGER, SUN GIRL! WE NEVER FOUND THE 200 THOUSAND DOLLARS THAT WAS STOLEN, OR THE REST OF THE GANG, EITHER! PATCHER, THE LEADER, WAS SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS! I WONDER WHAT HE WANTS! I'D BETTER...!

OOPS! ALMOST *FLAMED* IN MY HURRY TO GET TO STATE PRISON!

UH-UH! THAT NEARLY COST YOU A THOUSAND DOLLARS, TORCH! BETTER TAKE A PLANE *THIS* TIME!

SEVERAL HOURS LATER, IN THE WARDEN'S OFFICE AT STATE PRISON...

...AND YOU SAY MEMBERS OF YOUR OLD GANG HAVE BEEN THREATENING YOUR WIFE AND CHILD FOR INFORMATION ON THE LUBIN PLANT ROBBERY MONEY?

THAT'S RIGHT, WARDEN!

MY WIFE CHANGED IDENTITY! MY KID DOESN'T KNOW I EXIST! HE MUST *NEVER* KNOW! THOSE BUMS'LL DESTROY THEIR LIVES, BUT *YOU* CAN STOP THEM, TORCH!

THERE'S SOMETHING I CAN DO! I'LL NEED YOUR HELP, WARDEN!

ANYTHING, TORCH! PATCHER'S BEEN A MODEL PRISONER!

THAT NIGHT, THE DREAD "ESCAPE" WHISTLE SPANKS THROUGHOUT THE PRISON...

A BREAK!

YEAH! IT'S DAN PATCHER! HE'S FREE!

THE NEXT DAY AT THE HOME OF MRS. SORREL-THE FORMER MRS. DAN PATCHER...

MUMMY! SOMEONE'S AT THE DOOR!

SHUSH, BOBBY! I HEARD!

SUDDENLY...

DAN!

EASY, EVELYN! DON'T LET THE KID HEAR! I-I CAME WHEN I HEARD THOSE GUYS WERE AFTER YOU! DON'T TELL THE BOY!

HELLO, MISTER! MY NAME IS BOBBY SORREL! WHAT'S YOURS?

THIS IS AN OLD FRIEND OF MOTHER'S, BOBBY! NOW OFF TO BED, DEAR!

HELLO, SON

GET THE KID TO THE GOOD HEART HOSPITAL, CHILDREN'S WARD, FOR THE NIGHT! IF THOSE "PALS" OF MINE COME BACK, THERE MIGHT BE *TROUBLE!*

ALL RIGHT, DAN!

LATER...

OH! IT'S YOU TWO!

YEAH! WE SAID WE'D BE BACK!

WE THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'RE READY TO TELL US WHERE THE LUBIN STICK-UP MONEY IS BEFORE DAN GETS BACK!

ULP! PATCHER!

YEAH! FRESH FROM CELL TWENTY-SIX!

MAD WITH FURY, PATCHER RUSHES OUT TO CHALLENGE THE HOODLUMS WHO HAVE INVADED THE PRIVACY OF HIS HOME!

I'LL TEACH YOU TO BREAK INTO *MY* HOUSE!

YEOW! YIPES, DAN! CUT IT OUT!

SMACK!

WE HEARD YOU GOT OUT OF PRISON! WE CAME BACK TO BRING YA TO THE OLD GANG!

YEAH! IT'S A FACT! THE BOYS ARE WAITIN' FOR OLD DAN!

WHAT'S THIS? IS THE TORCH'S FAITH IN DAN PATCHER WORTHLESS? BECAUSE...

I HAD A HUNCH YOU GUYS WERE TOGETHER AGAIN! WHERE TO?

WE GOT A CAR OUTSIDE, DAN BOY! THE GANG'LL BE *GLAD* TO SEE YOU!

MINUTES AFTER THEY LEAVE, MRS. SORREL MAKES A DISCOVERY...

GRACIOUS! THIS TOWEL DAN USED HAS *MAKE-UP STAINS* ON IT! THAT MAN *WAS NOT* MY DAN! HE'S AN *IMPOSTER!* SUN GIRL WAS AT GOOD HEART HOSPITAL WHERE BOBBY IS! I WONDER IF...

AT THE HOSPITAL...

...AND SO I THOUGHT YOU COULD GET THE HUMAN TORCH TO INTERCEDE FOR ME, SUN GIRL!

MRS. SORREL, I'VE GOT A SURPRISE FOR YOU! JUST HOLD TIGHT FOR A LITTLE WHILE!

AS DAWN BREAKS IN ANOTHER PART OF TOWN...

ARE YOU GUYS CRAZY? HIDIN' OUT ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE LUBIN PLANT?

DON'T GET EXCITED, DAN! TODAY'S FRIDAY-PAYDAY!

LOOK, DAN! THAT DUMB GUARD DOESN'T KNOW IN FOUR HOURS THE PAY ROLL TRUCK WILL BE *CRACKED OPEN!*

IT'S *SUICIDE!* WE STUCK THE PLACE UP EIGHT YEARS AGO! THEY'LL NAB US *THIS* TIME!

LUBIN ANUFACTURING PLANT

BUT TREACHERY IS AFOOT...

OW-W!

YEAH! I REMEMBER! YOU GOT THE DOUGH AN' *YOU'RE GONNA TELL US WHERE IT IS!*

SMACK!

HOURS LATER...

AW, HE'S OUT *COLD*, PETE!

HUH? THROW SOME WATER ON 'IM! HE'S GONNA TELL US WHERE THAT 200 GRAND IS HIDDEN OR HE'LL BECOME AN ANGEL!

HEY! *LOOKIT!* HIS HAIR'S TURNIN' *BLOND* AND A LOT OF GOO IS COMIN' OFF HIS FACE! THIS *ISN'T* DAN PATCHER! IT'S *THE TORCH!* SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG WITH 'IM! *HE HASN'T FLAMED!*

NO... HE HASN'T FLAMED! STILL LOYAL TO HIS BARGAIN, TORCH DECIDES TO FIGHT THESE -- CROOKS AT THEIR OWN LEVEL!

CUT IT, PETE! THE PAY ROLL TRUCK'S COMIN' UP THE STREET!

SMACK!

TORCH MAKES A DESPERATE LUNGE AND...

I'VE *GOT* TO WARN THAT GUARD!

YEOW! HE GOT LOOSE! HEY!

THIS BLAST SHOULD SUMMON THE MARINE CORPS! *OHH-HH!*

WHY, YOU- GIVE ME MY MACHINE GUN!

BANG-G!

BUT JUST AS THE HOODS ARE ABOUT TO FINISH THE TORCH...THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN, AND...

THAT'S ENOUGH, PETE! PUT EM UP!

WHA--!

WHEW! JUST IN TIME! I WAS TEMPTED TO TURN MY FLAME ON JUST THEN!

TORCH! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

LATER, AT THE GOOD HEART HOSPITAL...

JEEPERS, TORCH! YOU COULD'VE FLAMED JUST *ONCE!*

DAN PATCHER TOLD US WHERE THE ROBBERY MONEY WAS HIDDEN! TEN PER-CENT OF IT IS REWARD MONEY FOR YOU, TORCH!

I WOULD'VE FLAMED TWENTY TIMES ON THIS CASE, SUN GIRL! THAT'S 20 THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH OF FLAME FOR THE GOOD HEART HOSPITAL FUND!

TO THE *GOOD* HEART FROM A *BIG* HEART! YOU'RE SWELL, TORCH!

WHILE AT MRS. SORREL'S...

GEE! TH' HUMAN TORCH HELPED CAPTURE ALL THOSE GANGSTERS! AND *WITHOUT FLAMING!*

YES, BOBBY! I KNEW HIM ONCE- FOR A FEW HOURS!

THE END

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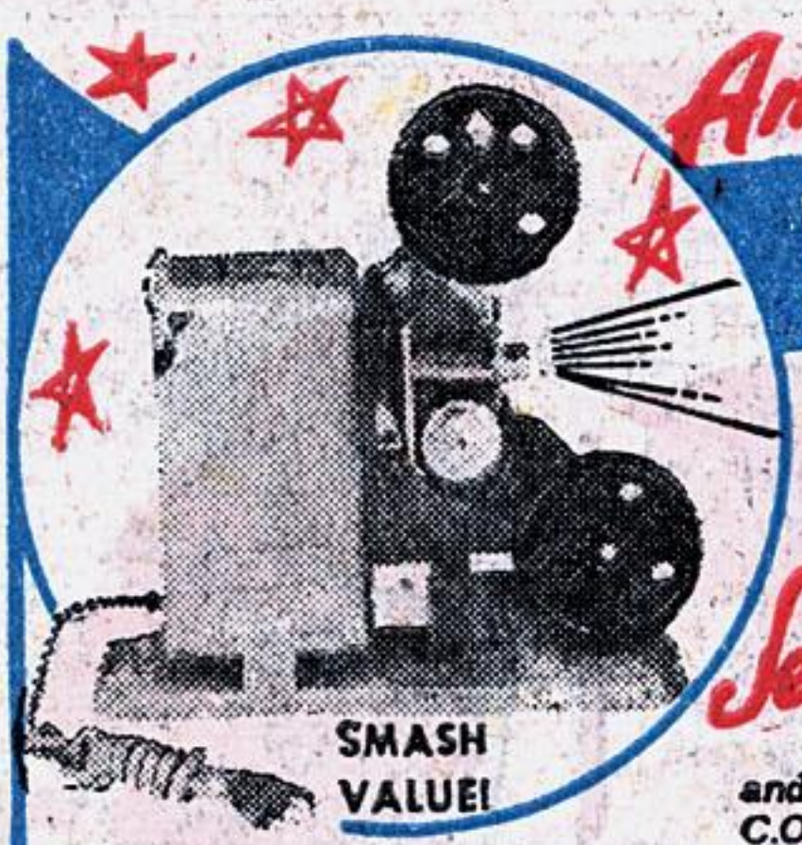

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